

**METHODS AND APPARATUSES FOR STABILIZING THE SPINE
THROUGH AN ACCESS DEVICE**

Abstract of the Disclosure

In a method of treating the spine of a patient, an access device is inserted into the patient with the access device in a first configuration. The first configuration has a first cross-sectional area at a distal portion thereof. The access device is actuated to a second configuration that has an enlarged cross-sectional area at the distal portion thereof such that the distal portion extends across at least a portion of two adjacent vertebrae. A motion preserving stabilization device is delivered through the access device and coupled with both vertebrae, stabilizing the vertebrae while permitting a range of motion therebetween.

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